



**Frederick County
Government
Frederick, Maryland**

News Release

Winchester Hall/12 East Church Street
Frederick, Maryland 21701
CONTACT: Robin K. Santangelo
Public Information Officer
301-600-2590
rsantangelo@FrederickCountyMD.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Clears way for voters to decide...

APPEALS COURT AFFIRMS ELECTION OFFICIAL DECISION ON CHARTER BOARD PETITION

FREDERICK, MD – A [Maryland Court of Appeals decision](#) today affirmed Circuit Court Judge John Tisdale's decision upholding Frederick County Election Director Stuart Harvey's conclusion that a petition calling for the election of Charter Board members contained insufficient signatures. Opponents of appointments to the Charter Board by the Frederick Board of County Commissioners sought to have a special election to determine who would draft a charter to lay out a new structure for Frederick County Government.

After careful scrutiny of the signatures by Mr. Harvey and election staff, the petitioners only had 1,742 valid names; 2,000 signatures were required to hold a special election to select members of a charter-writing board. Judge Tisdale ruled on October 8, 2011, to uphold Mr. Harvey's decision to reject the petition.

The nine-member board appointed by the County Commissioners last March has held many public meetings and dedicated countless volunteer hours to seeking public input to draft a document to allow voters the choice of changing the county from the commissioner form of government to a charter format.

Board President Blaine Young said, "We never had a doubt that the appeals court would affirm the circuit court ruling that supported a decision by Election Director Harvey, one of the most highly respected election officials in this state. The court has now cleared the way for Frederick County voters to make their own decision at the polls this November.

"The Charter Board appointed by the County Commissioners has been working tirelessly to draft a charter for local government, and they have been fully autonomous and have not reported to or acted at the direction of the commissioners. Today's decision will allow them to continue moving full-steam ahead without a legal challenge overshadowing their efforts.

(more)

“The County Commissioners ran on a platform that we would support the creation and establishment of a Charter Board to write a proposed constitution to alter our form of government. Every municipality in Frederick County is run by a charter government, and the majority of the Board of Commissioners believes that it is time to consider a change from a commissioner form of government to a charter government with local autonomy and authority. A charter government in Frederick County would be set up with a check and balance system with an executive and a legislative body. It has been 20 years since the voters had the opportunity to weigh in on the issue of charter government and the majority of the board feels that it is time for the voters to have that opportunity again.

“On behalf of the board, we want to acknowledge the hard work of County Attorney John Mathias and Election Board Counsel Daniel Loftus. This legal challenge has been costly to the taxpayers, but through the unified efforts of our legal counselors, the citizens now have a right to get their point-of-view heard during the 2012 General Election.”

Charter Board Final Public Hearing Scheduled

The Frederick County Charter Board is now in the final stages of drafting the proposed county Charter for voters to adopt or reject. The charter draft includes an elected county executive, a seven member county council with five members being elected by district and two members being elected at large. The draft of the proposed charter, the proposed districts, links to all Charter Board meetings and other information can be found at www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/Charter.

The Charter Board will hold a public hearing on Wednesday, June 27, at 7:00 p.m. in the third floor meeting room, Winchester Hall, 12 East Church Street, Frederick, Md. The purpose of this meeting will be to receive public comment and input on the proposed document. This will be the final opportunity for public comment and input prior to the submittal of the proposed charter in July.

The Charter Board is scheduled to present the final proposed charter to the Board of County Commissioners on Tuesday, August 7, at 7:00 p.m. in the first floor hearing room, Winchester Hall.

The Charter Board meeting is open to the public and will be televised live on Frederick County Government cable channel 19 and webcast on the Internet at www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/video.

For more information, contact Ragen Cherney in the County Manager’s Office at 301-600-1049, or via e-mail at rcherney@FrederickCountyMD.gov. Follow the Charter Board on Facebook at [Charter Board \(Frederick Co., MD\)](#).

For additional information about the appeals court ruling, contact Mr. Mathias at 301-600-1030 or via e-mail at jmathias@FrederickCountyMD.gov.